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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Extension Service, WASHINGTON 25, D.C.



VICTORY FARM VOLUNTEERS

June 24, 1946

For your information

TO ALL ASSISTANT STATE FARM LABOR SUPERVISORS, VFV:

Subject: News Letter

LOCAL RECRUITMENT AND YOUTH

We hear more every day about "local recruitment"--how we'll have to resort to it in many areas where PW's and foreign workers did the job last year. And we always perk up our ears. Local recruitment usually calls for more youth workers. It always has been the sanest way to solve our labor problems, but it's also one of the toughest. Local recruitment means a lot of organizational work for farm labor people, and we can't emphasize organization too strongly when boys and girls are going to be involved. Because the simple fact is that a youth program won't work unless there's planning behind the thing. Or if it works to solve the farmers' labor problems it will, without planning, be detrimental to our young people.

As Barnard Joy commented the other day, there is a greater need than ever this year for a sign-up campaign 2, 3, or 4 weeks before the peak need periods. Because labor supply is in such a state of flux, we can't otherwise estimate how much local labor we can count on. We think the early sign-ups especially important because it enables you to put some organization into any needed VFV program ahead of time. If you know that adult labor won't be around then you have time to plan for the youth.

JOURNEY MIDWEST--AND SOUTH

I had another good visit to KENTUCKY and the Midwest, including MINNESOTA, IOWA, ILLINOIS, and MICHIGAN. Back in

the office now, I have only one complaint--that the railroads might have picked a more opportune time to change their schedules. As it was, a couple of time changes caught me unwarned.

And what's happening in VFV in these parts? Here are a few impressions I got. First, it appears that more costs of the program formerly borne by Extension are being turned over to the farmer this year. Then I noted that more and older youth seem to be available but that, at the same time, farmers are being more particular about the labor they get.

Bill Ball and I visited the strawberry harvest in Kentucky, where they depend mainly on youth for this crop. I'd say the "kids" were pretty carefully selected as demonstrated by the fact that they worked hard and made good wages....In MINNESOTA, Bublitz and I had the services of a photographer to get some in-school pictures. Again, MINNESOTA will have a large number of live-ins, 500 of them from St. Paul and Minneapolis.

In ILLINOIS, one corn detasseling company plans to use 125 girls in a camp. The girls will get 60 cents an hour plus a five-cent bonus. And--this is interesting--after their first 40 hours each week, they'll get time and a half and double time for Sundays. State Supervisor Murphy also took me to see youth harvesting asparagus....There seems to be an unusually large number of migrants in MICHIGAN this year, Doris Shimkus told me in my visit to the Wolverine State. Farmers are anxious to get adult labor and some are hesitant in committing themselves to youth. Of course, MICHIGAN will continue to use a large number of boys and girls, as both live-ins and day-hauls, despite this trend.

YOU'LL WANT TO READ THIS ONE

Farm Jobs for City Boys is coming your way under separate cover. It's an Extension publication from MINNESOTA.

We've tried to procure copies for all of you who get the news letter--including directors, editors, and farm labor folks. The publication certainly merits that kind of distribution. Farm labor people will take a special interest in this exposition of "The Minnesota Plan," MINNESOTA's postwar program for using urban boys as a solution to its seasonal labor problem. Directors, too, will be concerned, especially in the administrative set-up which will tie in the urban youth program with 4-H.

Judging by the reaction we got from Harry Mileham, publications specialist in our information division, editors will like Farm Jobs for City Boys. "It's one of the most attractive and interesting bulletins I've seen in a long time," says Harry. "The bulletin starts its selling job with an effective cover. This is simply designed, colorful, and free from unnecessary details of various kinds."

Maybe you farm labor people haven't done much thinking about what makes Extension bulletins good reading. The information folks have. But since we all get into this publication writing if we stay around Extension long enough, I think you'll also be interested in what Mrs. Amy Cowing of our Extension readability unit has to say about Farm Jobs for City Boys, which, by the way, was prepared by MINNESOTA's VFV Supervisor C. E. Bublitz. Mrs. Cowing analyzes the material for its easy or difficult reading. She calls the make-up excellent and likes the large body type used.

Anyway, we'd like to add here that we're mighty pleased to see the information folks speak well of this VFV publication. We like the bulletin ourselves for the plan it proposes. There's much to think about in the Minnesota Plan.

"CITY-COUNTRY CLUBS"--DAKOTA STYLE

Here's another State putting down roots for a thriving urban youth program in the future. This time it's

SOUTH DAKOTA. And here's what Zach Wipf writes us about a training program for city youth as a part of the program in SOUTH DAKOTA schools.

Wipf says he's been talking over the need for training city youth for farm work with a number of schoolmen in his State. Their plan is to organize clubs. Until a better name is found, they'll be called "City-Country Clubs." Members, who will participate in a regular training program with field trips to farms, will be given priority on vacation jobs.

They set their aims down something like this: (1) Training city youth for farm jobs; (2) providing farm experience; (3) providing wholesome out-of-door jobs; (4) promoting better rural-urban relationships; and (5) bringing about better citizenship as city youth "learn by doing."

GOOD OLD IOWA!

One of the most significant turns in a State VFV program which I ran on to in the Midwest is IOWA's plan for a corn detasseling camp. It's IOWA's first VFV camp although as day-hauls and live-i IOWA boys and girls made a terrific contribution to food production during the war.

This year a seed company plans the camp for 400 to 500 boy detasslers to be brought in from counties in southern IOWA where no hybrid seed corn is raised. The company is footing the costs. Camp director will be the swimming coach at Iowa State College. He'll have two assistants, and there will be a supervisor for each 25 boys. The boys will have use of both a swimming pool and a ball diamond--what a happy set-up for the recreation director as well as the boys!

These VFV campers will be paid 60 cents an hour plus a 5-cent bonus for staying the entire period. Supervisors will be schoolmen who will recruit their own groups of boys and transport them to camp in school busses, if possible.

It seems the seed company didn't have a good experience with Mexican nationals last year. And now they're betting on selected boys under good supervision. The boys promise to be a more likely labor source for the future, anyway.

Everett Ritland, IOWA's VFV supervisor, tells me they look for 30,000 youngster to detassel corn this year. The Hawkeye State, by the way, will have 104,000 acres of hybrid seed corn in 1946. Good old IOWA! That's pardonable pride, I hope, in my native State.

INTERNATIONAL ANGLE

It looks as if some folks overseas are going to hear what America's young people are doing to produce food and

fiber this year. I can't tell you where the information will be distributed, but a State Department writer was in the office a few days ago to get the "low-down" on the VFV's. Naturally we cooperated heartily. We hope that those in other nations, where youth have borne such heavy burdens in war, can be told about our program. VFV's, like all the Nation's youth who got on familiar terms with hard work in wartime, should make America more understandable to foreigners.

This representative of the State Department's Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs was led to visit us by an inquiry about food production plans which came from one of our embassies in another country.

"ON THE BALL" PUBLICITY

MICHIGAN'S VFV program:

With no further comment needed, we mention these public relation activities in connection with

1. In Michigan Farmer for May 18--"The Farmer Takes a Boy," by Janice Hopps.
2. Two fine VFV radio scripts, of which we've been sent copies. The second one, for May 27, featured VFV Supervisor Doris Shimkus and Miss Hopps.
3. Five news stories about VFV's from Michigan State College's public relations people, including one for release to high school newspapers.

VFV'S FOR PW'S

MARYLAND is one of those States that face another big harvest year but along with it the prospect of no PW labor.

Paul Nystrom, MARYLAND farm labor supervisor, says that they're losing 6,000 PW's this year--and VFV's are being counted on to help make up this deficit. At any rate, it means that MARYLAND is definitely expanding its youth program.

Although MARYLAND had used a few live-in boys during the war, this year they plan to recruit larger numbers in the Washington and Baltimore areas. Two men in the Baltimore and Washington school systems are supervising this recruitment and screening the boys. Live-ins will start with \$40 a month wage, with board. Nystrom says that farmers will be expected to increase this after about 2 weeks. And here's an interesting angle--for screening farmers, determining those with whom VFV's should be allowed to live, farmer committees are being set up in counties.

In addition to the live-ins, MARYLAND plans five farm labor camps. Here, too, the farmers are playing the big part. Extension left it up to growers whether they would have camps. County farm labor associations voted to set-up camps, sponsor them, and pay the cost. To do so, they are levying service charges on farmer members. These camps are all on the Eastern Shore, where the boys will be used for hay and grain, general farming, corn detasseling, peaches, cucumbers, and tomatoes.

A WOMAN'S HAND

Here's a squib about a youth program run by a woman and one that's well thought of in the State office. Say's

WISCONSIN'S Farm Labor News, "An excellent and complete youth recruiting program is being carried on in Barron County by Nollie A. Coe, farm labor assistant." Mrs. Coe got county high school boys together, made a list of those interested in farm work, and then furnished lists of farmers to the boys. Sixty-two boys were signed up immediately, and 113 found available for full-time jobs when school was out.

GOOD READING--WITH PICTURES

I don't know what kind of distribution these printed reports of State extension services get, but two that recently

reached my desk impressed me a great deal. Both contained some good VFV pictures along with other excellent ones. I'm thinking of LOUISIANA's 1945 annual report and CALIFORNIA's farm labor report for 1943-45. I hope these were distributed your way.

ON THE ROAD....

We're getting our field trip schedules down pat now. Roberta Clark has already departed for her western trip, and for your information she'll be in Missouri--June 25; Kansas--June 26-27; Colorado June 28-July 1; Utah--July 2-3; Oregon--July 9-11; Washington--July 12-16; and South Dakota--July 22-23.

My own field trip schedule calls for me to visit Pennsylvania, July 1, 2, and 3. PENNSYLVANIA's putting a big emphasis on its live-in program again this year, and I'm anxious to see this program which I missed visiting personally, last summer. As I told you in the last news letter, we hope also to visit some of the nearby Eastern and Northeastern States before the summer is over.

Both Miss Clark and I are concentrating on pictures when we visit you folks in the field. By requesting them for you, we received some excellent VFV pictures last summer--but it's surprising how fast these are used up in our publications and other ways. And we never have had a complete cross-the-country file of good youth work pictures. Any help any of you can give along this line during this crop season will surely be appreciated.

'ANOTHER EXCELLENT JOB'

"Older and bigger" boys is a description we're hearing frequently these days in connection with 1946 VFV's. This time it's

MASSACHUSETTS, according to VFV Supervisor L. L. Derby. Derby writes to say that MASSACHUSETTS VFV's are already doing "another excellent job."

High and private school students answered the call for the asparagus harvest--and high school youth are also helping with the Cape Cod strawberry harvest, where they get a million quarts of berries from 220 acres.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

Here, sketchily, are some bits of news about State youth programs which indicate the national picture....if you put these

bits together:

With a reduction of Mexican nationals for UTAH, cherry growers are almost totally dependent on youth for the cherry harvest. And Lawrence Braugh is UTAH's new VFV supervisor....Jack Taylor informs us that the YMCA in Monmouth County, NEW JERSEY, is helping with the youth sign-up. High-school students can register at YMCA headquarters or the farm labor office....In Whatcom County, WASHINGTON, schools, recruiting was being done in May for the strawberry harvest due to begin June 1....ALABAMA set up at Foley a VFV camp to get the potatoes harvested in Baldwin County. VERMONT has asked for 710 boys and girls from NEW JERSEY, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW YORK, and PENNSYLVANIA. They'll be live-ins, of course....CONNECTICUT tobacco growers will use in the neighborhood of 600 FLORIDA youth again this year and 345 PENNSYLVANIA VFV's

PENNSYLVANIA's extension editor, E. H. Rohrbeck, continues to get out fine weekly farm labor stories with good youth angles....From them we learn that many PENNSYLVANIA farmers "who did not ask for workers last year have already filed requests for help this season"....McHenry County, ILLINOIS, reports "we had 10 boys out from Chicago last Saturday. They were larger and older than last year. Considering their attitude and evidence of ability, they should make good help."....Says WASHINGTON'S May 28 news letter: "Apparently youth will again furnish the bulk of the labor needed to handle light seasonal jobs this summer and early fall." Late May reports from OREGON say platoons are being ordered in increasing numbers.

CONTACTING MISSISSIPPI SCHOOLS

To secure the cooperation of county superintendents of education for getting youth workers on farms, MISSISSIPPI's

State Superintendents of Education, J. M. Tubb, wrote to the county people. And he added this comment: "It occurs to me this is an excellent way for town and

city boys to spend the summer and at the same time render needed service in food production and conservation.

GREMLINS COMBATTED

We've finally secured the letter-heads which we're accustomed to using on this news letter. If you've noted, they've been missing lately. Gremlins--in the form of a coal strike and the like--were responsible for the delay.

Don't forget--we're always interested in what's new in your State VFV program.

Sincerely yours,

Irvin H. Schmitt

Irvin H. Schmitt, Chief
Victory Farm Volunteers Division
Extension Farm Labor Program

(Copy to directors, editors,
State supervisors)

